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GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS



Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Public Health Department

1995 Annual Report

A Teaching Health Unit Affiliated with McMaster University and University of Guelph

URBAN MUNICIPAL

MAY 10 1997

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Mission Statement

We work with you, the people of Hamilton-Wentworth to protect and improve health, now and in the future. We provide leadership in public health and strive for excellence through responsive, effective and efficient services, education and research.

Council of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth (Board of Health)

Regional Chairman
Chief Administrative Officer

Terry Cooke
Michael Fenn

Health and Social Services Committee

Marvin Caplan
Chad Collins
Geraldine Coppers
Tom Jackson
Ted McMeekin (Chair)
Dave Wilson
Bernie Morelli
Robert Morrow
Grant Shaw

Management Committee of the Regional Public Health Department

Medical Officer of Health
Associate Medical Officer of Health
Teaching Health Unit Coordinator
Director, Finance & Administration Services
Director, Environmental Health Branch
Director, Healthy Lifestyles Branch
Director, Healthy Growth & Development, Nursing Services
Director, Healthy Growth & Development, Nursing Services
Director, Child and Adolescent Services

Dr. Marilyn James
Dr. Elizabeth Richardson
Dr. Larry Chambers
Dan McInnis
Bill Hunter
Helen Hale Tomasik
Jane Underwood
Vicki Woodcox
Hank Van Dooren

Teaching Health Unit Joint Liaison Committee Members

Management Committee Members (see * above)

McMaster University; Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. Andrea Baumann, Associate Dean, Health Sciences
Dr. May Cohen, Associate Dean, Health Services
Dr. Kinsey Smith, Associate Dean, Education

University of Guelph
Professor Michael Nightingale, Dean, College of Family and Consumer Studies
Dr. Donna Woolcott, Chair, Department of Family Studies

Regional Public Health Department Locations:

Hamilton:

21 Hunter Street
2757 King Street East
25 Main Street West
100 Main Street East
1447 Upper Ottawa Street

Dundas:

2 King Street West

Stoney Creek:

163 Centennial Parkway North

We can be reached at....
(905) 546-3500

The Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth
Regional Public Health Department
P.O. Box 897, 25 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON
L8N 3P6

MESSAGE FROM
THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AND
CHAIR, REGIONAL HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

A healthy community starts with healthy partnerships.

In 1995, the Regional Public Health Department forged more new partnerships in the community than ever before. We strengthened old ones and identified other new valuable partners.

One kind of partnership that grew last year is with the people who provide peer support to those in the same age group, or with the same cultural backgrounds or interests as themselves. Public Health trained everyone from teens to seniors to facilitate groups which ranged from providing good nutrition for new babies to suicide bereavement. We know that people get more out of talking to their peers than well-intentioned strangers. And when peers provide support, we make better use of our funding dollars. Simply, we can help more people this way.

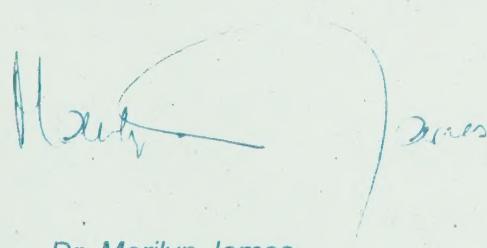
As a Teaching Health Unit, we've teamed up with McMaster University's Faculty of Health Sciences and the University of Guelph's Department of Family Studies. This partnership had us involved in an unprecedented level of research last year. That research in turn improves the kind of services we provide to the community.

Other partnerships brought brand new challenges. In 1995, we began enforcing the Tobacco Control Act for the first time in conjunction with Ontario's Ministry of Health. We're already seeing results: prior to implementation of the act, 50% of area retailers were willing to sell cigarettes to minors. After it was in enforcement for two months, that number dropped to 29%.

Working with everyone from boards of education to citizens' groups and individuals, we've found a healthy community requires partnerships that constantly evolve and improve. Our Public Health staff are on the front lines of keeping these partnerships dynamic - and we must commend their excellent work last year. This annual report highlights some of the most significant achievements.

In 1996 and beyond, we will continue to strengthen the partnerships that help us reduce the barriers to basic health needs, create opportunities for better health for everyone and prevent injury and disease.

Working together, we can keep the community healthy.



Dr. Marilyn James
Medical Officer of Health
Hamilton-Wentworth Regional
Public Health Department



Ted McMeekin
Mayor of Flamborough & Chair
Health & Social Services Committee

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENDITURES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1995

	BUDGET	ACTUAL
REVENUE		
Ontario Ministry of Health	1,173,856	11,189,770
Regional Municipality of Hamilton - Wentworth	2,976,690	2,974,370
Ministry of Community & Social Services	1,560,300	1,444,650
User Fees & Other Revenue	1,188,760	1,293,570
Ministry of Environment & Energy	175,000	104,930
City of Hamilton	27,730	27,730
TOTAL REVENUE	17,667,040	17,035,020
EXPENDITURES		
MINISTRY OF HEALTH - 75% FUNDED		
Healthy Children	3,345,170	3,265,710
Healthy Adolescents	716,460	699,440
Healthy Adults	979,250	955,990
Healthy Elderly	1,132,260	1,105,370
Tobacco Use Prevention	60,140	58,710
Substance Abuse Prevention	175,420	171,250
Nutrition Promotion	576,070	562,390
Physical Activity Promotion	176,310	172,120
Reproductive Health	242,440	236,680
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	265,230	258,930
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	432,570	422,300
Tuberculosis Control	91,420	89,250
Outbreak Control	302,260	295,080
Infection Control in Institutions	181,450	177,140
Food Safety	812,370	793,070
Water Quality	56,840	55,490
Rabies Control	65,230	63,680
Emergency Response	18,240	17,810
Non-Communicable Disease Investigation	28,710	28,030
Equal Access *	--	--
Community Health Information *	--	--
	9,657,840	9,428,440
Administration	868,070	847,450
Total 75% (Funded by Ministry of Health)	10,525,910	10,275,890

* General Program cost absorbed by other programs and external support such as the Health Priorities Analysis Unit.

**HAMILTON-WENTWORTH REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENDITURES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1995**

EXPENDITURES (CONTINUED)

Ministry of Health - 100% Funded

	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Children In Need Of Dental Treatment (CINOT)	446,870	408,280
Sexual Health	728,050	726,570
Tobacco Use Prevention	240,960	234,940
Teaching Health Unit	1,153,900	1,162,120
AIDS Prevention	305,540	288,790
Hepatitis B Implementation	159,350	77,290
Health Promotion Grants	98,550	62,190
Drug & Alcohol Prevention	474,030	474,030
Mental Health Promotion	283,830	282,870
Anonymous Testing	50,500	49,710

Total 100% funded (by Ministry of Health)

3,941,580

3,766,790

Total Ministry of Health Funded Programs

14,467,490

14,042,680

Region Funded Projects:

Second Level Lodging Homes	89,850	89,830
Dental Treatment	128,960	109,570
Debt Charges on Capital Project	79,000	77,980
Region Cost Allocations	100,000	100,000

Total Region Funded Projects

397,810

377,380

Other Funding:

Ministry of Community & Social Services - Child & Adolescent Services	1,560,300	1,444,650
Ministry of Environment & Energy - Septic System Approvals	334,770	302,650
Sale of Public Health Nursing Services - Home Care	173,960	184,460
Sale of Public Health Nursing Services - Other Agencies	269,500	244,160
Property Work Order Program	74,610	69,020
Federal Research Grants	388,600	370,020

Total Other Funding

2,801,740

2,614,960

Total Expenditures

17,667,040

17,035,020

Dollar amounts are estimated based on assignment of staff time to programs.

Staff are typically involved in activities that meet more than one program standard.

1995 ORGANIZATION OF THE REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Healthy Growth & Development Branch

Program:

- Healthy Children
 - Healthy Parenting
 - Reproductive Health
 - Healthy Kids
 - Healthy Teens
 - Child & Adolescent Services
- Healthy Adults/Healthy Elderly
 - 2nd Level Lodging Homes
 - Mental Health Promotion
- Healthy Sexuality

Communicable Diseases

- Infection Control in Institutions
- Vaccine Preventable Diseases
- Tuberculosis Control
- Outbreak Control

Dental Services

- Children in Need of Dental Treatment (CINOT)
- Regional Dental Treatment

Healthy Lifestyle Branch

Programs:

- Tobacco Use Prevention
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Alcohol & Drug Assessment Services **
- Nutrition Promotion
- Physical Activity Promotion

Environmental Health Branch

Programs:

- Food Safety
- Water Quality
- Rabies Control
- Emergency Response
- Non-communicable Disease Investigation

Executive Services

Finance and Administration Services

Teaching Health Unit Services

Programs:

- Information Services (Library)
- Research Support Services
- Education Support Services

* Child and Adolescent Services is a children's mental health service 100% funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services

** Alcohol and Drug Assessment Services is an assessment, referral and case management service funded 100% by the community Mental Health Branch, Ontario Ministry of Health

HEALTHY GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

Facts & Stats

- **82 Adult series held in 5 locations**
 - 817 adult couples registered
- **2 Adult Single prenatal series held**
 - 63 adult single expectant mothers\coaches registered

**TOTAL ADULT = 88 series,
880 registered**

- **23 teen prenatal series held,
192 teens registered**

**GRAND TOTAL = 1072 clients
serviced**

- **an average of 6375 births
have occurred yearly in
Hamilton-Wentworth since
1990.**

In 1995:

- **3,258 new home visits and
6,528 return home visits were
made to families with
children ages 0-5 years**
- **1,852 clients were referred by
Home Care:**
 - **529 were Maternal Infant
Program (early post-partum
discharge) referrals and**
 - **1,469 Maternal Infant
Program home visits were
made**
- **1,250 other Home Care visits
were also made to families with
young infants and children.**
- **26 postpartum support drop-in
sessions for women were held**
- **58 postpartum women
attended these sessions**

Healthy Children

Prenatal classes are offered to three target populations: adult couples, adult single women aged 20-25 years and teenage women. There has been a consistent waiting list for adult couples so that 2 more series were instituted in Fall, 1995. Single young adult classes were developed to meet the needs of women aged 20 to 25 years. The Teen Prenatal Program continues to operate at full capacity with plans to develop a new location at the Red Hill Community Centre in collaboration with Regional Community Services. An initiative supported by McMaster University faculty has been developed to assess teen knowledge gains and teen postpartum needs.

The Parent/Child Program implemented revised criteria for admission in September 1995 reflecting a move towards providing services to families living in at risk conditions. The target was a 30% reduction in public health nurse home visiting and a concomitant increase in time for public health nurse group and community interventions. Public health nurses collaborated with the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police, Regional Planning Department, Department Culture and Recreation, Hamilton Housing and many other agencies in meeting the socio-environmental health needs of these families.

The Maternal Infant Program, a joint program with Hamilton-Wentworth Home Care Program to provide nursing and support services (homemaking) for mothers and infants on discharge from hospital, was discontinued by the Home Care Program for budget reasons in September 1995. The original criteria were renegotiated and now consists of three stringent categories: "extreme not coping", "medical problems for mother" and "medical problems for infant". There were further reductions to admissions in December when a "self-care" component was added to the criteria by the Home Care Program.

Women that experience emotional or adjustment difficulties after childbirth attend sessions on a drop-in basis facilitated by a Parent Child public health nurse. Formal evaluation revealed that the Postpartum Support Program is effective in 4 areas: validation of client issues, empowerment to cope with their issues, hopefulness that they would recover, and emotional support for other family members.

HEALTHY GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **2 weekly drop-in groups for prenatal and new mothers: Eastgate Square and Roxborough Park Community Centre (to November)/St. James the Apostle Church (November on)**
- **1 bi-weekly drop-in for mothers of toddlers and preschoolers: Mom's Time Out**
- **3,948 information calls of which**
 - **51% were about child care concerns**
 - **24% were about breast-feeding infants aged 2 weeks to 3 months**
 - **22% were about infant nutrition**
 - **17% were about maternal issues**
 - **15% were about child behaviour**
 - **7% involved registration for classes**
- **7 "Parent Talk I" series with 70 registrants**
- **5 "Parent Talk II" series with 50 families participating**
- **9 "Nobody's Perfect" series (4 CAPC and 5 non-CAPC) were completed:**
 - **91 parents started program**
 - **76 parents completed program (84%)**
- **32 families were visited by Resource Parents offering services in Arabic; Punjabi/Urdu/Hindi; Serbo/Croatian; Polish; Vietnamese/Cambodian.**
- **7 immigrant women were trained at a two-week workshop in October**
- **program advisory committee was established with 12 community and agency representatives**

"Babies Best Start" - Joint venture between St. Joseph's Community Health Centre and the Health Department serves socially isolated and economically disadvantaged pregnant women and families with infants and young children. The seconded public health nurse to this Program provides individual, group and community interventions to help mothers address their health and socio-environmental issues. Healthy nutritional practices are supported by on-site food preparation with a dietitian and the provision of food vouchers through the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Project. Bus tickets are provided through the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) through Health Canada.

The majority of calls (59%) received by the Parent Child Information Line concerned children less than one year of age. Another 7-12% of calls were received from other health professionals in the community. The number of calls is consistent with those received in 1994 (4,063) although there are a significant number of hang-ups, about 22%. Strategies are being considered to analyze and resolve the issue of hang-ups.

"Parent Talk I and II" are parenting classes for families with children from birth to one year (I) and ages one to four years (II). Evaluations of group participants reveals that the peer support offered assists parents in developing effective parenting skills. As these sessions tend to appeal to moderately well functioning parents, public health nurses are using community development strategies to support groups to continue meeting as a self-help group. Further evaluation is underway.

"Nobody's Perfect" is an educational/support program for parents of children up to five years. These parents are young, single, isolated, have limited education or finances. Participants reported an increase in their self esteem, support networks and receptiveness to the value of groups.

The "Parents Helping Parents" Program is one of seven programs funded federally through the Community Action Program for Children. This program provides home visit support to multicultural families with young children through Resource Parents (mothers trained as home visitors who visit families of like culture and language). Several aspects of the program were developed throughout 1995 including a research project evaluating effectiveness separately from the federally funded evaluation strategies already in place; and development of promotion tools (pamphlets, flyers and a video in the four predominant languages).

HEALTHY GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **750 families will be visited**
- **165 of these families were visited by Public Health Nurses in 1995**

- **142 families will participate**
- **36 of these were visited by Public Health Nurses in 1995**

- **11 Preschool Drop-ins and Resource Centres received Public Health Nursing Services**

- **Healthy Babies, Healthy Moms**
 - **92 mothers and 46 children attended the pre and postnatal group**
- **65 children on average attended the Breakfast Program daily.**
- **13 women attended the Healthy Lifestyles Immigrant Women Group**

- **4 newsletters issued for 200 licensed child care centres**
- **2 focus groups were held with child care providers to assist with updating the Partnerships in Child Care Binders**

- **An estimated 800 clients and their families received approximately 5700 direct services.**

- **646 new referrals were accepted in 1995**

"When The Bough Breaks", is a randomized control trial sponsored by the System-Linked Research Unit at McMaster University, and the Hamilton-Wentworth/Halton Public Health and Social Services Departments and is funded by the National Health Research and Development Program (\$630,000). The purpose of this study is to assess the costs, effects, and benefits of a mix of interventions (health promotion, recreation/skills development for children and employment/retraining/childcare). Referrals to Public Health Nursing were shared equally by the Parent Child and the Healthy Kids Programs.

This randomized control trial called "Family Connections" will determine the effectiveness of public health nurse home visits on preventing the recurrence of child abuse and neglect within families where abuse has already occurred. This three year study is funded through National Health Research and Development Program, and is conducted in collaboration with the McMaster University Centre for Child Risk. 77% of families who participated in a pilot study developed a positive relationship with the public health nurse.

Six to 30 mothers (and fathers) meet regularly with their children in Preschool Drop-ins and Resource Centres. Public health nurses provide on-site individual and group consultation, teaching and counseling. The objectives of the service are to reduce isolation and support parenting skill development. At one site in a subsidized housing complex, community development strategies are being used to assist the mothers to make health promoting changes in their lives.

Public health nursing services were provided to the patient population of the North Hamilton Community Health Centre. Community development strategies were employed in work with the surrounding neighbourhoods to provide support such as multi-cultural pre and postnatal groups through Mission Services, and a lifestyles group. A breakfast club commenced at a local church in the Spring of 1995 with support from the local school, the community dietitian and public health inspection.

The Nursery Nuggets newsletter was produced by an interdisciplinary team of nutritionists, dentists, environmental health inspectors, public health nurses and the staff in the Child and Adolescent Program. The newsletter was disseminated to all child care centres, resource centres and day cares in private homes.

Child and Adolescent Services provides assessment, consultation and individual and family intervention for children and youth ages two to 18 residing in Hamilton-Wentworth.

Parents and youth are empowered to participate directly in decisions regarding referral.

HEALTHY GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **401 referrals of children under 12**
- **4 Child Welfare assessments**
- **35 children received intensive play therapy**
- **5 professionals received Marriage and Family Training**
- **4 professionals were involved in the play therapy extern program**
- **15 consultations were provided**
- **2 clients received ongoing treatment**
- **1,449 phone calls were received on the Healthy Kids Phone Line in 1995**
- **New video developed for parents of elementary school children**
- **4 Healthy Kids Program Newsletters and 6 Fact Sheets were sent to elementary schools and agencies for distribution to parents and school staff**
- **5,828 individual contacts to elementary school-age children and their families by public health nurses**

The staff at Child and Adolescent Services conducted multi-disciplinary assessment and treatment of individual children and families.

Four assessments, involving a total of nine children, were conducted for Child Welfare agencies and the court where complex issues of family dysfunction, child disturbance and parenting capacity were involved.

Children who have experienced abuse, neglect or witnessed severe domestic violence were referred by Child Welfare agencies for intervention.

Community professionals were given training in marriage and family therapy and professionals who had previously received play therapy training continued to develop their skills through supervision. Involving these professionals increased Child and Adolescent Services ability to serve children, their families and the community at large.

In 1993 the Dissociative Disorders Consultation Project was established in the Child & Adolescent Services to augment the understanding of dissociative disorders. Through 1995, this project continued to contribute to the care and treatment provided by mental health professionals through the provision of diagnostic consultation. The Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada funds this project.

The Healthy Kids Phone Line provides the public with direct access to a public health nurse for health information, consultation, or to access other services for elementary school-age children such as assessment, referral to community services, counseling, groups for children and parents, interactive health education workshops for children, presentations for parents, school staff, and community groups.

A 10 minute video entitled "Working Together for Healthy Kids: Public Health Nursing" was developed in collaboration with the Hamilton Board of Education. It was developed for kindergarten parent information meetings and parent groups. It provides a cost effective alternative to individual nurse: parent interviews. Information about public health services, how to access services through the Healthy Kids Phone Line, and information about immunization and head lice is provided.

Some topics for "Healthy Kids" newsletters and fact sheets were: injury prevention (helmet safety, biking, rollerblading and skateboarding), prevention of frostbite, bullying, and anaphylaxis (symptoms and treatment for allergic reactions), tips for parents to improve family relationships, how to deal with sibling rivalry, stress, and helping kids to cope at school.

Individual contacts with children, their families, and school staff include: visits with children at school, home visits, phone visits, conferences and consultations. There has been a steady decrease in the number of individual contacts since 1992 which is consistent with a desired shift toward more group and population-based services.

- **40,059 children and parents attended educational presentations and self help groups**
- **151 principals and staff responded to an evaluation of Healthy kids newsletter and other school health projects**

Interactive health education workshops for children included: active living, nutrition, prevention of tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse, problem solving and resistance to peer pressure skill development to assist with making healthy lifestyle choices, puberty, prevention of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Educational sessions on Hepatitis B were presented to grade seven students. Self help groups included parenting groups eg. Ready or Not!, and groups for children: "Little Ripples", "New Wave", and "Good Grief" (bereavement).

A survey of elementary school principals and staff was conducted in 1995. Fifty-one responses were received from principals and teachers. 78% rated the Healthy Kids newsletters and fact sheets as good or very good; 94% share the information with parents and school staff, 81% rated the Healthy Kids Phone Line helpful or very helpful, and 73% rated the interactive health education workshops good or very good.

Healthy Teens

- **223 parents of teens participated in 8 workshops**
- **4,825 individual contacts with teens and their parents**
- **433 counseling sessions with young offenders**
 - **889 teens contacts in 69 groups**
 - **8 education sessions with 98 staff**
- **6,956 participants in 349 interactive group sessions**
- **3,953 consultations and 2,218 conferences in secondary schools**
- **81 STOP peer education sessions for 2,360 grade 8 and high school students**
- **70% of teen respondents reported intent to change after STOP peer education sessions**

Evaluations were very positive for sexuality and parenting workshops led by public health nurses at Hamilton Board of Education's Parent Conference.

Public health nurses provided individual counseling, education, and referral for teen and parent issues such as relationships, sexuality, bereavement, lifestyles, divorce, and violence.

In support of the Department's Equal Access Program, counseling, group work and staff education were provided to Arrell Youth Centre clients.

Public health nurses facilitated educational sessions for teens and school staff on topics such as sexuality, relationships, violence and healthy lifestyles.

Consultations and conferences were provided by public health nurses to peers, school staff and other community professionals.

With McMaster University Health of the Public Project funding, Students Talking to Other Peers (STOP), a joint project of Teen Health and Healthy Kids Programs expanded to new schools. Evaluation of STOP indicated positive effects on attitudes and intent to change in response to teen parent educators.

HEALTHY GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **16 advisory committee meetings held related to 2 adolescent health centres**
- **4 focus groups held with 39 teens and parents**
- **21 secondary principals respond to survey (84 %)**
 - **83 % of respondents were very satisfied**
- **17 peer support group series held for 159 teen participants**
- **245 youth over age 12 were referred for services**
- **15 Young Offender Act assessments were completed**
- **2 Child Witnesses of Violence Groups, 1 for boys and 1 for girls, of 10 to 12 sessions each**
- **A parental support group evolved from the children's groups**
- **405 referrals were received from parents, this represents 63% of the total referrals to the clinic**

At the Churchill Student Health Centre and Mounteen Home, a joint project with Stonechurch Family Health Centre, public health nurses facilitated participation of teens, school/agency staff and parents.

To provide input about needs and service delivery for the Teen Health Program, focus groups and consultations with the Boards of Education staff were held.

To evaluate current service and elicit input for future plans, secondary school principals were surveyed and provided very positive feedback about the nursing services.

With school or agency staff, public health nurses facilitated group series addressing anger management, bereavement, separation/divorce and body image.

Multi-disciplinary assessment, treatment and consultation were provided by the Child & Adolescent Services staff. The Forensic Services Unit of the Clinic provided assessments for the court and consultation to custody settings for youth in custody.

Groups that were designed in 1994 to address special needs of children (ages 9 to 13) who have witnessed violence in their homes were offered again in 1995. Some of the sessions included parent participation. Community collaboration is maintained at planning levels and at front line case management levels as Child & Adolescent Services staff work closely with other agencies in development and delivery of services.

Child and Adolescent Services continued to offer responsive services to our clients through a centralized intake process.

Healthy Adults/Healthy Elderly

- **14,311 total contacts (people all ages)**
 - **4,104 contacts (20-64 yrs.)**
 - **4,364 contacts (65-74 yrs.)**
 - **5,799 contacts (75+ yrs.)**
- **2,760 Home Care visits**

Telephone consultation and home visits relating to health education, counseling and promotion of physical, social & emotional well being were provided.

With VON Home Care Program funding, public health nurses made visits to adults, seniors, and their families providing health education and support.

HEALTHY GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **100 client visits**

Public health nurses through VON Caregiver Support Program also provided education and support to clients re: caregiving and community services.
- **397 new assessments**

Through VON Placement Coordination Services, public health nurses conducted home assessments providing support and community service information.
- **6,486 contacts**

Client and family conferences promoted optimal care and service provision for adults and seniors.
- **needs assessment of homeless**

Public health nurses worked in multi-disciplinary partnerships with Social Services, Wesley Centre, and the YMCA addressing health issues of the homeless and underhoused.
- **297 presentations to adults & seniors**

Public health nurses gave presentations to adults and seniors on healthy aging, bereavement, stress, elder abuse, breast health, nutrition, medications, alcohol use, caregiver support and safety to seniors' communities, English as a Second Language centres, unemployment programs, spiritual communities & agencies.
- **9 presentations to 92 unemployed persons**

Public health nurses provided individual counseling and gave presentations at group sessions with unemployed people.
- **10 presentations to 120 Region employees**

Presentations on Workplace Health Promotion were provided in collaboration with the Corporate Health Services of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth.
- **14 presentations to 306 seniors**

Public health nurses and senior volunteers gave video and display presentations to seniors on the Senior's Safety Initiatives Project - "Are You In Jeopardy".
- **17 presentations to 589 members of multicultural groups**

Multicultural group presentations included topics such as breast health and safety.
- **753 contacts related to community development**

Using a community development approach, public health nurses worked with groups of adults and seniors to identify health issues and develop strategies.
- **17 Seniors Residences & Centres**

Health promotion activities for seniors included presentations, home visits and participation on committees at senior centres such as at First Place, 801 Upper Gage, St. Elizabeth's Village and Sackville Hill Seniors Centre.
- **751 clinic attendees**

"Heart Matters!" Is an education and support series planned by public health nurses and a consumer advisory group.
- **30 sessions on heart health to 489 attendees**

Cancer prevention activities included presentations on topics such as breast health and the development of a breast health network.
- **28 cancer prevention presentations**
- **502 attendees**

HEALTHY GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **3 Intergenerational Programs projects**
- **17 presentations**
- **391 attendees**

- **13 Caregiver Education and Support presentations**
- **161 attendees**

- **4 bereavement series (10 weeks each)**
- **5 attendees per week**
- **8 presentations**
- **76 attendees**

- **Crown Point**

- **15 Elder Abuse Play presentations**
- **338 attendees**

- **319 community based committee meetings**

- **Chedoke PMAC Outreach Secondment**

- **Stonechurch Family Health Centre**

- **Primary care connections**

Intergenerational Program projects were developed to link seniors with the community. An intergenerational resource booklet was developed and distributed. An Intergenerational Advisory Group is emerging.

Caregiver support activities included: presentations, participating on Caregiver Advisory Committee, providing input to Resource Guide for Caregivers of Older Adults, preparing an Infowatch on Caregiving Trends, training caregivers for group leadership, participating on District Health Council Caregiver Support for Health Action Task Force and Regional Comprehensive Health Care Plan.

Peer facilitators were trained and supported to facilitate Suicide Bereavement & Bereavement Support Groups. A manual was prepared for peer and public health nurse facilitated support groups. A Bereavement Assessment tool was developed and presented on Telemedicine Canada. A resource booklet, "How Can I Help My Children with Their Grief", was developed and marketed by the Bereavement Committee.

Crown Point community development project supported adults and seniors to identify and develop programs to enhance health. A breakfast program for children in neighbourhood schools is being designed.

A seniors' group with public health nurses performed "Elder Abuse Play" for community groups. Interest has been expressed in additional scripts eg. social isolation. A public health nurse participated on the Task Force on Elder Abuse and Self Neglect.

Public health nurses participated in community based committees addressing adult and seniors' issues, including Aging In Place, Task Force on Elder Abuse and Self Neglect, Taras Schevchenko (Ukrainian Seniors) Board, Breast Health Network, Multi Service Agency, Educational Centre for Aging and Health, Clinical Teaching Units Without Walls, Continuing Gerontological Education, Immigrant Service Intercultural Network and Regional Advisory Committees (Services for Seniors; Persons with Physical Disabilities, Food and Shelter, Roomers and Boarders).

A public health nurse was seconded to Chedoke Psychiatry and Medicine for the Aged in the Community located at Chedoke Hospital. A public health nurse is a member of an interdisciplinary clinical and education program providing services for community elderly people and their caregivers.

A palliative/bereavement care program was planned for Stonechurch Family Health Centre by a committee with participation from Centre staff, students, and clients.

Public health nurses continued to provide health promotion in collaboration with some family physician practices.

- **4,873 Information calls**
- **523 Referrals accepted**

Central Intake responded to telephone inquiries for general information, consultation, and referrals for nursing services. Public health nurses worked closely with the Communicable Disease Program staff.

• **3 Funded Projects**

Public health nurses received funding for the following projects: a survey for the Task Force on Elder Abuse and Self Neglect; "Alternatives: Prevention and Intervention for Alcohol and Drug Problems in Seniors"; and "Are You in Jeopardy", Seniors' Falls Prevention Project.

- **13 students**
- **440 student contacts**

Public health nurses participated in the Clinical Teaching Unit Without Walls Project. Educational experiences were provided for nursing, medical, and international students.

- **22 professional education presentations**

Public health nurses provided education to professionals including topics such as bereavement, assertiveness, elder abuse and stress.

- **Community Development Interest Group**

Public health nurses developed interprogram strategies related to health promotion and community development to enhance community health.

- **6 research projects**
- **9 students**

Public health nurses worked on research projects:
Female Genital Mutilation Research
Physician Survey on Elder Abuse
With 4L02 nursing research students, staff completed:

- caseload analysis of isolated frail seniors
- list of health issues with unemployed people and service providers
- intergenerational literature review

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

AIDS/STD:

- **65 educational sessions to high risk groups**
- **1,506 STD Infoline calls**
- **668 anonymous HIV tests**
- **650 reported cases of STDs including 541 chlamydia, 105 gonorrhea, 4 syphilis**
- **492 new contacts in the STD clinic**
- **20 HIV +ve cases reported**
- **15 AIDS cases reported**

The STD/AIDS program incorporated the use of multiple strategies in its disease prevention and health promotion programming. Access to services is provided at a number of clinic sites, by telephone and through a mobile unit.

- **7,577 clean needles and 5,280 condoms distributed**
- **220 new and 792 repeat client contacts**
- **162 contacts for basic medical care**
- **32 contacts for addiction services**

The VAN program established a Community Coalition Committee to develop policies for community agencies who support the premise of needle exchange and who may also be willing to provide the service in their agencies. The coalition met for one year during which time the policies were completed. Five of the member agencies have begun to provide needle exchange services on their premises.

Family Planning

- **5,625 female client visits**
- **1,572 STD tests provided**
- **187 male visits**
- **672 clients attended birth control information sessions**
- **186 pregnancy tests and counseling sessions**

Birth control clinic services were provided by public health nurses in three locations - Dundas, Stoney Creek and the Hamilton Mountain. These services include education, counseling, pregnancy testing and referral, and sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment.

A pilot co-op education program was initiated at the Stonechurch Family Practice unit site. Four high school students (two males and two females) worked on peer education and peer support projects. The students also presented an overview of their co-op role to the Ontario Cooperative Education Association Conference, developed and acted in a video about the clinic, and worked on special projects, for example, dating violence, teen pregnancy and issues related to gay and lesbian youth. Student and staff evaluation for the project were positive and the program will be continued in 1996.

Community Mental Health Promotion Program

- **4,329 contacts with people with serious mental illness**

Public health nurses provided case management and counseling treatment services to people with serious mental illness.

Thirty-six clients, (11 community clients and 25 hospital clients), 4 public health nurses and 26 psychiatric hospital staff participated in the "Bridge to Discharge" project evaluation. The program involves integrating the services of the public health nurses and hospital staff to ease clients' transition and adjustment to the community. Clients are satisfied with the program (only 2 out of 11 community clients required short stay hospitalization). Clients report that the program has improved the quality of their lives by providing a greater sense of autonomy and control over their own lives and contributing to a greater sense of self worth and self esteem. Economic evaluation demonstrated \$496,862 savings to taxpayers in one year (Forchuk et al. 1995 unpublished).

- **Staff increase of 1 full-time equivalent Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital staff as a "Developmental Assignment"**

The Community Outreach Project was initiated by Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Public Health Department to help women with serious mental illness and homelessness through case management services.

25 health and social agency staff participated in a survey and focus groups and 10 consumers were interviewed. The study results identified a number of challenges, strengths and recommendations in the health, social and housing system: people in Hamilton-Wentworth experienced homelessness: approximately 160 people in Hamilton-Wentworth experienced homelessness in any given day; 36% of people who were homeless were identified as having mental illness; 5 times more men than women were homeless; at least 41% of the people who were homeless and mentally ill were reported to also have substance abuse problems.

Second Level Lodging Home Program

- **82 Second Level Lodging Homes, 1,620 residents (bed capacity 2,125).**
- **661 contacts which included :**
 - 409 inspections
 - 112 reinspections
 - 94 complaints
 - 47 consultations/requests

The population profile of Second Level Lodging Homes in Hamilton-Wentworth was 64% elderly, 27% psychiatrically disabled, 6% developmental handicapped and 3% medical. Second Level Lodging Homes are classified as for-profit housing.

Public health nurses and inspectors work together to ensure compliance with area municipalities' Second Level Lodging Homes By-laws and provide consultant and guidance to operators and staff. This program is wholly funded by the Region.

DENTAL SERVICES

Facts & Stats

- **40,766 children were screened in total**
- **40,385 children screened in schools**
- **381 children self-referred**
- **6,809 (17%) of children screened were "urgent need"**
- **1,614 children received financial assistance for urgent dental care**

Screening (brief visual inspection) for the presence of dental disease was performed by Dental Services staff.

Screening was carried out through the Screening, Urgent Referral and Follow-up Service (SURFS) offered to all Hamilton-Wentworth elementary schools in the Public and Separate school systems.

Self-referred children were screened in the Regional Public Health Department dental clinics located at St. Joseph's Health Centre and 1447 Upper Ottawa Street.

Screening identified those children in need of urgent dental care.

Further analysis shows that, of all the children identified by Dental Services staff as requiring urgent dental care, the cost of obtaining dental care was significant barrier to access in 24% of cases. Children received financial assistance through the provincially funded CINOT (Children in Need of Dental Treatment) program. 65% of the families of children using CINOT were receiving some form of Social Assistance income support. 35% were children of the working poor who were not receiving any form of Social Assistance.

DENTAL SERVICES

- **Young children (age 0-5) accounted for more CINOT expenditures than older children**
- **638 individuals attended Regional Public Health Department Dental Services Clinics**

Very young children (age five or less) accounted for proportionally more CINOT expenditures than older children. The average cost per claim for treating these very young children was considerably higher than for treating older children. This reflects both a high level of disease and a need for specialist care.

26% of individuals attending the Department's dental clinics for preventive, screening or treatment services were between the ages of 14 and 24 years. They received routine dental care under the Marginal Income Dental Treatment Program funded by the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. These adolescents had no dental insurance and were not eligible for dental care under any of the Social Assistance Income Support programs.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Facts & Stats

- **430 students in grades 6-9 completed the student health survey. Of those students, 47% have tried smoking a cigarette, 18% were current smokers, 28% of smokers buy their own cigarettes, and only 9% believe they will smoke in the future**
- **5,000 What's Out There Pamphlets, developed in partnership with the Lung Association Hamilton-Wentworth, were made available to individuals, agencies and health care professionals across the region in 1995**
- **During 1995, the display on Women & Smoking was displayed in at least 14 community locations with durations ranging from 1 day to over 2 months**

Tobacco Use Prevention Program

The Comprehensive School-Based Tobacco Use Prevention Project is a partnership between the Tobacco Use Prevention Program, other health department programs, community agencies and local schools. In September, two additional schools joined the pilot for the 1995-1996 school year. Late in the fall, the three participating schools took part in a baseline survey of grade 6-9 students. The survey instrument, developed with the assistance of the Health Behaviour Research Group at the University of Waterloo, assessed student attitudes, knowledge and behaviours concerning tobacco, alcohol and marijuana. The baseline data was used for educational and awareness purposes within the schools and in the surrounding community.

The Tobacco Use Prevention Program supported education and awareness activities through consultation, affiliation, and partnerships with the Hamilton-Wentworth Council on Smoking and Health, Lung Association Hamilton-Wentworth, Public Health Professionals, Central-West Tobacco Use Prevention Coordinators and Provincial and Health Canada Tobacco Control Agencies.

In Partnership with the Lung Association Hamilton-Wentworth, the community display on "Women and Tobacco: Myth Versus Reality" was used in a variety of community sites including schools, hospitals, community clinics, workplaces, and special community events.

- **Survey results of 70 - workplaces show that 46% allow smoking somewhere within the worksite and 31% of respondents said they did not have signs to mark where smoking is and/or is not allowed, which is required by the Ministry of Labour's Smoking in the Workplace Act (1990)**
- **1,024 adult residents of Hamilton-Wentworth were surveyed about their smoking behaviours and attitudes toward smoking in public places**
- **ACTION resources will be made available to community and health agencies and all elementary and high schools in 1996**
- **1,042 adult residents of Hamilton-Wentworth were surveyed about their drinking behaviour**
- **430 students in grades 6-9 were surveyed about their alcohol and cannabis use**
- **21 health professionals and business representatives participated in a two-day workshop on workplace alcohol policy**

In March 1995, Dundas and Ancaster workplaces were surveyed about the current status of their smoking policies. Designed as a follow-up to a survey conducted in Stoney Creek in 1993, the purpose was to gauge smoking activity in workplaces not covered by a municipal no-smoking bylaw. Results demonstrated that provincial workplace regulations are not being adhered to, and that municipal intervention could be an effective means of reducing environmental tobacco smoke exposure to employees.

During November and December 1995 a telephone health survey was commissioned. About half of the survey asked about smoking and attitudes toward smoking in public places. The results of the survey showed strong public support for making all public places 100% smoke-free.

Substance Abuse Prevention Program

Staff were instrumental in the Advisory and Steering Committees of the School and Community Drug Prevention Project of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Training. The project is producing community and school resources called "ACTION" for transition age youth (grades 7-9).

During November and December 1995 a telephone health survey was commissioned. Questions examined respondents drinking behaviour and will be compared with 1990 Ontario Health Survey data to determine any changes in drinking patterns in the last 5 years.

Results of a survey of grade 6-9 students in three Hamilton schools demonstrated that 9% reported trying marijuana and 10% reported drinking alcohol at least once per week. Survey results provided baseline data and direction regarding educational activities in the schools and communities.

In collaboration with the Community Alcohol Resource, the Substance Abuse Prevention program planned a two day workshop on Workplace Alcohol Policy for local health professionals and workplaces.

Alcohol and Drug Assessment Services

- *935 referrals received*
- *Group treatment for early intervention and for seniors*
- *20 presentations on early identification and brief intervention*
- *Development of community services*

The program provides assessment, service information, outpatient treatment, and referral to more intensive treatment or community services as needed. These services are provided, also, on an outreach basis to the hard-to-serve street population.

Two groups for the treatment of alcohol and other drug problems were started. The first, for people with mild to moderate alcohol problems, supplements individual brief-outpatient work. The second group for seniors, *55 and Better*, is an attempt to better reach this population. Both are intended to increase service effectiveness and efficiency.

Presentations on special topics; such as, early identification of alcohol problems, or intervention with seniors, youth and those with mental illness, were provided to health professionals and interested community groups.

Staff participated on community committees to influence the development of substance abuse services in the community. This included participation on the Addiction Research Foundation Board, the Pregnancy, Alcohol and Drugs Network, and the Addiction Services Group who are planning the coordination of services.

Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion Program

- *5 industry partners assist with development of "Eating Around the Clock"*
- *3-site Perinatal Nutrition and Support Project was awarded operational funds by Health Canada*

Nutrition and physical activity materials for shift workers and occupational health professionals were produced in partnership with Dofasco, Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police, Hamilton Street Railway, Baycoat and St. Joseph's Community Health Centre. Media coverage of the work spawned interest from every province.

The Perinatal Nutrition and Support Project was designed to provide avenues for food supplements; nutrition counselling; skill development in planning meals and snacks, food shopping and preparation; social support and referral to other programs on issues related to lifestyle. Pregnant women in need of such support were encouraged to participate. The partner agencies are: Regional Public Health Department, St. Joseph's Community Health Centre and North Hamilton Community Health Centre. It is anticipated that this is the first of several phases for this Project.

- **"Choosing an Active Healthy Lifestyle" was completed and released to 3 Boards of Education for grades 7 to 9 teachers**
- **"Getting There is Half the Fun" was completed and distributed to grade 6 teachers in the Region and to all health units in the Province**
- **41 service providers from 31 agencies, took part in a community consultation on the "Nutrition for Health, An Action Plan for Canada"**
- **722 consultations and 31 workshops to 1,007 professionals**
- **141 newspaper columns, media releases and interviews**
- **190 community group activities to 4,999 consumers**
- **2,435 requests received by the Program Resource Centre; 71 resources developed, reviewed or revised**

Resources to support the health curriculum for grades six to nine were completed and distributed to school staff. Working with staff and students from the three school boards and outside technical support helped to make these resources relevant and responsive to the needs of the target groups. To respond to demand from outside the Region, negotiations to place production, marketing and distribution of these two resources with a nonprofit agency are under way.

"Nutrition for Health An Action Plan for Canada" was initiated by the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization. In 1995, Health Canada asked communities to respond to a draft of the Plan. Nutrition staff facilitated the Hamilton-Wentworth consultation process which included child care providers; social service, health, recreation, and media professionals; school and university staff; and representatives from other community agencies.

Physical activity and food and nutrition advisory services were available on demand to health, social service, education, recreation and media professionals. As the only nutrition consultant service in the Region, staff were called upon to develop and update the nutrition component of other community programs as well as provide professional updates on nutrition.

Healthy eating was promoted through the "Nutrition Advisory" column in the Spectator, Today's Senior, and through feature articles on initiatives like Cooking for One workshops, and through media releases. Media support was engaged for community events such as the "Nutrition Month" luncheon held at the Sheraton Hotel to raise funds for the School Nourishment Fund administered by the Hamilton Community Foundation.

Skill development and education sessions were provided through programs like "Supermarket Safari", "The Welcome Basket", "Cooking for One", "Healthy Eating" and "Collective Kitchen Organizers" workshops.

Current nutrition and physical activity information was distributed through the Program Resource Centre to public health staff and other health professionals; social service, recreation, education and media professionals; community agencies and day care centres; and consumers.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Tuberculosis Control

- 95 referrals for surveillance of immigrants with inactive TB received
- 57 reported cases investigated
- 29 contacts of cases investigated
- 22 cases of disease confirmed
- 3 of 29 (10%) of TB contacts had positive skin tests indicating infection (no disease)
- no TB deaths

Professional and public awareness of tuberculosis control was developed through provision of community presentations and educational sessions.

Medications for the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis are provided free of charge through the Regional Public Health Department.

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

- 76,500 doses of influenza vaccine distributed
- 27,320 doses of DPTP/Hib (Penta) vaccine distributed
- 12,450 doses of MMR vaccine distributed
- 6,191 grade 2 students screened for immunization
- 5,457 Grade 7 students finished 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine in the Spring
- 5,446 new Grade 7 students received first 2 doses of hepatitis B vaccine in the Fall
- 2,503 secondary students with 1978 birth year screened for immunization
- 1,558 students (15%) required immunization
- 1,127 children in day care were screened for immunization status 84.3% completely immunized for age at time of screening
- 384 suspensions issued to elementary and secondary school students

The Regional Public Health Department distributed all routinely-administered vaccines to more than 350 area physicians and institutions.

In October 1995, preparations began for the mass measles vaccination program to begin in 1996.

Infection Control in Institutions

- Member of infection control committees in 6 acute care hospitals and 18 long-term care facilities
- 17 respiratory outbreaks reported & investigated
- 6 outbreaks of enteric disease investigated and confirmed in institutions

Presentations on infection control practices including universal precautions, tuberculosis, and influenza prevention and management were provided by public health inspectors and nurses to area institutions and agencies.

The first identified outbreak of Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) was investigated in a long-term care facility.

Outbreak Control

- 292 cases measles
- 251 cases campylobacter
- 130 cases giardiasis
- 94 cases salmonellosis
- 86 cases influenza
- 38 cases pertussis
- 28 cases verotoxin producing E-coli
- 27 cases yersiniosis
- 22 cases hepatitis A
- 8 cases invasive group A Streptococcal disease
- 5 cases meningococcal disease
- 4 cases viral meningitis
- 2 cases acute hepatitis B
- 1 case typhoid fever
- 0 cases invasive haemophilus influenza B
- 0 cases mumps
- 0 cases rubella
- 0 case tetanus

Over the period from April to August 1995, 299 cases of measles were investigated and confirmed. 79.5% of cases occurred in students enrolled in 59 elementary schools and 8 secondary schools, which represents about 20% of the schools in the region. 67% of affected students were between the ages of five and 13 years. 13,000 student immunization records were reviewed, 2035 (15.6% of students screened) were identified as having incomplete records of measles immunization. 44 measles immunization clinics were provided and 301 students received a dose of measles vaccine at these clinics. 76 students were excluded from attending school during the outbreak.

Control of diphtheria, polio, tetanus, mumps and rubella continued to be successful with no cases being reported.

Of the enteric diseases reported, 70 investigations involved two or more individuals while 51 were single case investigations.

Food Safety

- 3,100 visits to food premises
- 875 responses to request
- 541 food complaints investigated
- 5 food recalls
- 8 tickets issued

- 63 food safety seminars for 1,148 food-handlers

- 150 festivals
- 653 vendors

Inspections of restaurants, cafeterias, supermarkets and other sectors of the food industry remains an essential component of the Environmental Health Branch activities. Laying charges and issuing tickets are two of the ways to ensure compliance with food safety legislation, but emphasis is also put on education of food preparation and service employees.

Arrangements were made with Mohawk College to provide a six week food safety certification course. The course began in September of 1995 and interest has been high. The first successful students graduated in November. Food safety seminars were conducted throughout the year in food premises, schools and day care centres.

A joint investigation was conducted, with the Ontario Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and Niagara Regional Health Unit, into the sale of cheeses made from unpasteurised milk. Several products were seized and destroyed and charges were laid.

Outdoor festivals are increasingly popular in this Region, some numbering attendances in the tens of thousands. While they add much to the cultural milieu of the Region, these festivals present a special challenge for the Environmental Health Branch. Considerable organization is required to ensure that food is properly prepared and stored, volunteer staff are properly trained, adequate and potable water is available, garbage facilities are suitable and sewage disposal arrangements are satisfactory.

Water Quality

- 904 bacterial water samples taken
- 7 water quality surveys

Staff continued to monitor private water supplies at a number of varied locations such as schools, retirement homes, community centres, campgrounds, trailer parks, and food premises. Over 15% of the Region's population depends on private water supplies. The Department encourages these citizens to submit drinking water samples regularly for bacterial analysis and the Branch responded to numerous requests for interpretation of the results and advice on appropriate remedial action. There were no problems with municipal supplies in 1995.

Recreational Waters

- 6 beaches monitored
- 735 bacteriological samples taken
- 304 inspections of pools, spas, wading pools

The opening of the City of Hamilton's Harbourfront Park in 1993 led to public swimming in Hamilton Harbour for the first time in many years. The Environmental Health Branch monitored the quality of the water at the park throughout the summer of 1995 as well as the bathing areas on Lake Ontario and the public beaches operated by Conservation Authorities. All of these facilities were suitable for swimming for the vast majority of the summer.

Private Sewage Disposal Systems

- **1,332 total visits and assessments of sites for private sewage disposal systems**

A number of sanitary surveys were conducted, in areas served by septic tank systems, to determine the need for extension of municipal sewers. A downturn in the residential construction sector meant that applications for Certificates of Approval were below average in 1995, as were severance and rezoning applications. A Ministry of Environment and Energy directive that communal sewage systems must be utilized for new development of subdivisions and trailer parks and that these systems must be owned and operated by the Region, led to the development of an approval policy and operating guidelines which were created in partnership with the Region's Planning and Environmental Services Departments.

Emergency Response

- **6 Local Municipal Emergency Plans**
- **1 Regional Emergency Plan**

On two separate occasions, a number of residents on Hamilton Mountain had to evacuate their homes when elevated levels of carbon monoxide were detected in their basements. An investigation conducted by staff was able to conclude that the source was ongoing blasting to facilitate the installation of storm sewers. Staff, working with the Regional Roads Department, devised a protocol for future blasting which should prevent a recurrence of this incident.

Most emergencies which this department responds to are "Acts of God" or human error. Nevertheless, in 1995 we were called twice to incidents of vandalism. In the first, patrons and staff had to be evacuated from a downtown roadhouse when at least two vials of ethyl mercaptan were broken in the customer area. This chemical emits a highly unpleasant odor and can be toxic. Several people required medical attention, but fortunately there were no serious effects. Secondly, a number of tenants in a Hamilton apartment building reported nausea when a foul odor permeated their building. This was found to have emanated from a home-made oil, made from rotting fish, which was poured on hallway rugs by a disgruntled tenant. Charges were laid by the police. Staff assisted in the investigation and arranged for analysis of the fouled carpeting.

Non Communicable Disease Investigations

- **Landfill site enquiries**

A proposal to establish a landfill site in a quarry on Stoney Creek Mountain required considerable input from the Environmental Health Branch and from the Medical Officer of Health. This involved review of technical data submitted by consultants for the proponent, attendance at public meetings, interviews with the media and several reports to Regional Council. A decision on this proposal is expected from the Minister of Environment and Energy in 1996.

- **Promoting a healthier environment by supporting and facilitating community action and advocacy for healthy public policy**

- **Waste sites**

- **PCBs in fluorescent light fixtures**

- **Lead in soil**

Public health staff worked with the Homeside Environmental Committee (a local community group), politicians, Ministry of Environment and Energy staff and representatives from McMaster University to address air quality issues in East Hamilton. Several research studies will be initiated in 1996, including a study of puffer use among school-aged children in the subject area.

Decommissioning of a site in West Hamilton, formerly operated as a speciality chemical manufacturing facility, began in late 1995. Prior to this, staff reviewed the technical reports for the proposal and attended a number of public meetings. A proposal to extend the operation of a municipally operated garbage incinerator from five days per week to seven days per week also required input from staff and dialogue with the public.

Several parents expressed concern, both to the department and the media, when children at an East Hamilton school were exposed to a liquid leaking from a burnt-out fluorescent light fixture. The ballasts for these fixtures often contain PCBs which are used for insulation. Working with the Board of Education, the Branch reassured parents that their children were not at risk.

Elevated lead concentrations in soil in a north-end residential area resulted in an investigation by staff in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment. A former lead smelter was found to have been the source and a public educational campaign was undertaken.

Tobacco Control Act

- **29% of Region retailers found to be willing to sell cigarettes to minors in 1996 despite tobacco Control Act**

Since the Act came into effect on November 30, 1994, this year was the first for enforcement. Following a public and retailer awareness campaign, staff began conducting surveillances and laying charges in March of 1995. Tobacco sales to minors and smoking in prohibited facilities such as schools and hospitals were the main offences. The effectiveness of these strategies were demonstrated in two surveys undertaken in Hamilton-Wentworth. In 1994, immediately prior to the implementation of the Act, 50% of retailers were shown to be willing to sell to minors. A follow-up survey in May, 1995, showed that this number had dropped to 29%. Ensuring a high public profile for this program in 1996 is seen as an important strategy towards lowering this percentage even further.

Facts & Stats

- **46 cross appointees**
- **4,455 hours of staff time**

- **32 continuing education activities**
- **889 participants**

- **1,365 students participated in clinical/applied educational experiences**
- **11,960 hours of student contact with staff**

- **Community learning packages**

Education Activities

Regional Public Health Department collaborated with a number of educational institutions to provide student education activities, coordinate education efforts and maximize the use of resources.

The faculty/Regional Public Health Department cross-appointees combine service with education and research responsibilities and are funded either 100% by the Ministry of Health through Teaching Health Unit funding or by cost-sharing with the Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University; The Division of Applied Human Nutrition, College of Family and Consumer Studies, University of Guelph; and/or the Regional Public Health Department.

Cross-appointees and Regional Public Health Department staff offered a variety of continuing education activities, such as workshops and presentations directed toward the Regional Public Health Department, McMaster University, other health units in the Central West Region, physicians, nurses, social workers, the Ontario Ministry of Health, the Ontario Public Health Association, and the Canadian Public Health Association.

The Regional Public Health Department provided educational opportunities for health sciences and other education programs to promote interdisciplinary learning. Students from the following educational programs were involved in Regional Public Health Department activities: medicine, community medicine and family practice post-graduate residents, nursing (BScN), Mohawk College nursing, dietetic interns, graduate and undergraduate students in applied human nutrition, MSc Design, Measurement and Evaluation Program, MHSc, public health inspection, dental assistants, social work, child and youth worker, family relations and human development, addiction services diploma, psychology, physical education, occupational and physical therapy, and consumer studies.

Cross appointees were also involved with curriculum development, course development and coordination, and administrative duties.

A learning package directory briefly describing the learning packages was distributed widely to students, programs and other health units.

EDUCATION & RESEARCH/EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

- *1,400 books in RPHD library*
- *120 public health related journals*
- *Over 120 files on current topics in public health*
- *Collection of health related press clippings*
- *2,512 individual requests in 1995*

The Central West Library Network provides service to the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Public Health Department as well as six health units (Halton, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph, Waterloo, Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk and Niagara) in the Central West Region. Since the establishment of the Regional Public Health Department Library in 1986, use by Regional Public Health Department staff has steadily increased. Library services includes:

- computer searches of articles and documents
- borrowing books and journals from the Hamilton Health Library Network
- making interlibrary loans through North America
- distributing press clippings, title pages of current issues of journals and other resources to staff and students at the Regional Public Health Department.

Research/Evaluation Activities

- *26 externally funded projects*
- *13 internally funded projects*
- *23 articles accepted for publications*
- *103 oral presentations*
- *24 poster presentations*
- *1 videotape*
- *85 nursing students*
- *8 Community Health Work-In-Progress Rounds*

The Regional Public Health Department continued its commitment to integrate research into service activities of the Regional Public Health Department. Research/evaluation projects were conducted in all of the DPHS programs for 1995.

Nursing students were attached to research teams for a variety of research projects.

Regional Public Health Department staff provided thesis consultation to:

- 7 graduate level university students in 1995
- 5 nutrition students
- 1 nursing student
- 1 epidemiology student

Rounds were held in the Regional Public Health Department for staff, cross appointees and guests on a variety of topics including an "Update on the Canadian Study on Health and Aging", "Public Health, Environmental Health and Social Science", "Benefits of a Postpartum Support Group", "A Pilot Nutrition Education Program for Informal Child Caregivers", "Child Pedestrian Injuries in Hamilton-Wentworth", "Family Connections Study", "An Overview of the Effectiveness of Community Based Heart Health Program" and "Provincial Nutritional report of the 1990 Ontario Health Survey".

STAFF IN THE REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN 1995

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Eaves, Teresa E.
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Elliott, Dorothy Elizabeth
Eyles, John
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Farrace, Silvana
Ferguson, Kathy
Filer, Corinne
Fortuna, John Battista
Francis, Sandra Alicia
Fraser, Janet Veronica
Fraser, Kelly L.
Fredson, Muriel Louise
Freeburn-conry, Erin Coleen
French, Lorraine
French, Susan
Fric, Christine Heidi
Frosina, Carolyn Jean
Furlong, Betty
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Garrison, Lynn Elizabeth
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Gomez-Perales, Veronica
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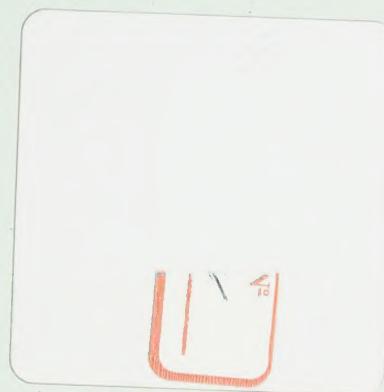
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